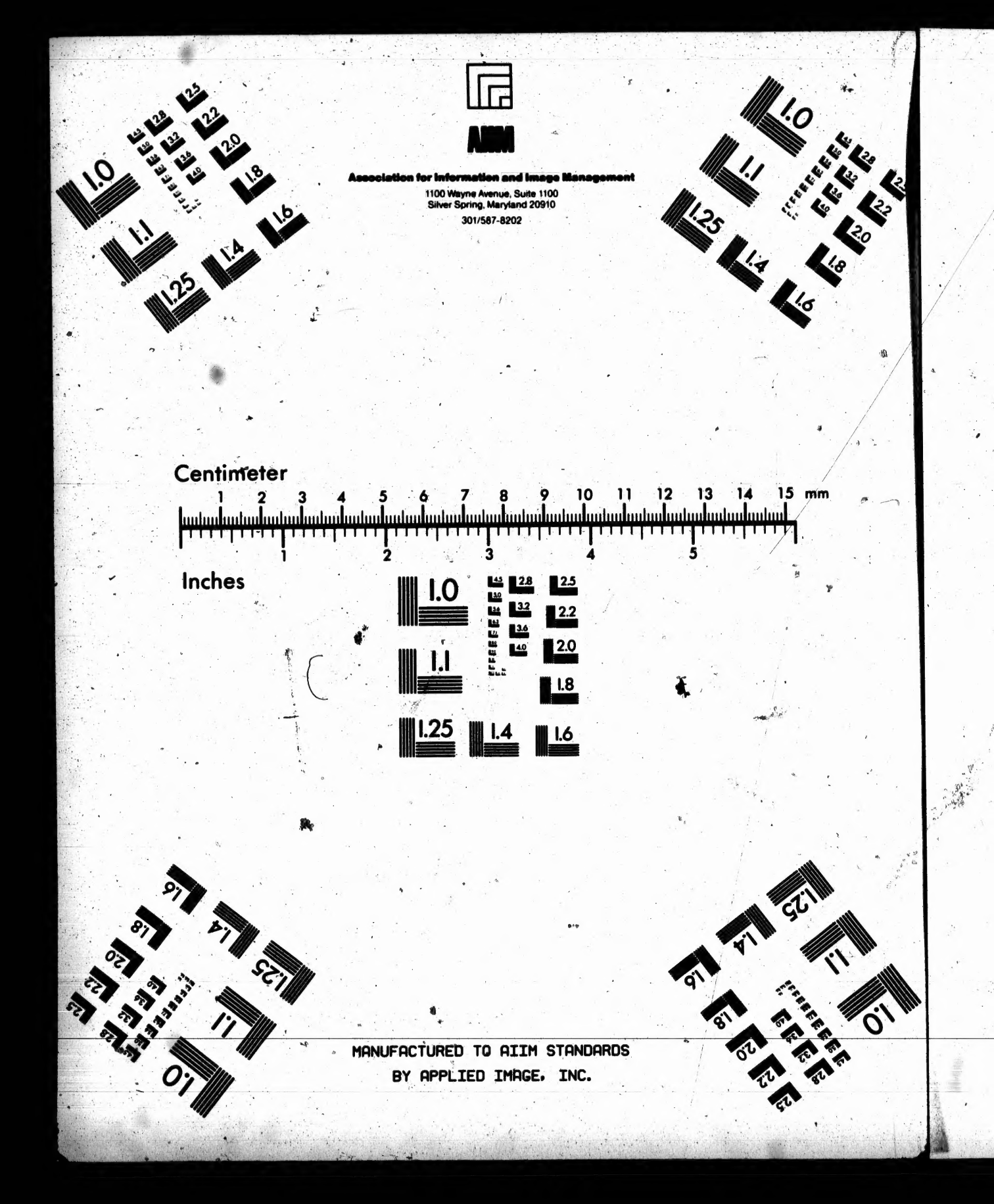
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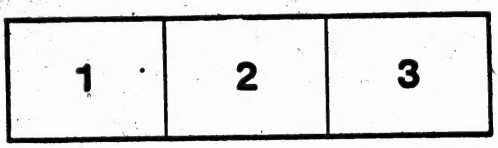

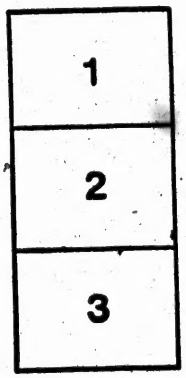

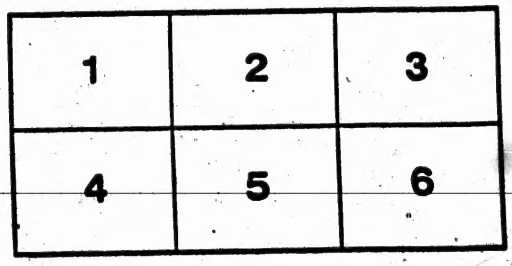

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TABOR;

OR,

THE CLASS MEETING.

A Plea and an Appeal;

ADDRESSED TO

HEARERS OF THE WESLEYAN MINISTRY,

AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO THE CONGREGATION OF FISHER STREET CHAPEL,
CARLISLE.

BY WILLIAM MORLEY PUNSHON,

WESLEYAN MINISTER.

TORONTO:
PUBLISHED BY G. R. SANDERSON,
AT THE WESLEYAN CONFERENCE OFFICE, 9, WELLINGTON BUIDINGS, KING STREET.
1855.

Price 2d. each: $4 per 100; $30, per 1000.
In stiff covers, 64 pp., 3d. each, or 7s. 6d. per dozen.

[The substance of the following address was suggested by a conversation, held between the Minister and Office-bearers of the Carlisle Circuit, at their last Quarterly Meeting—a day, which those who were privileged to attend its sessions will not readily forget—distinguished as it was for harmony of counsel, for unanimity of purpose, and for that large measure of Divine influence which made it to all present a blessed means of grace. That it may, in its present form, minister to the prosperity of our beloved Zion, is the writer's one hope, and fervent prayer.]

October, 1848.

TABOR; OR, THE CLASS-MEETING.

If any of you, dear friends, had been privileged to witness the scene which once hallowed the summit of Tabor ;—if you had seen the Saviour baptized as the King of Glory ;—if you had "feared as you entered into the cloud ;"—if you had been a favoured listener to that heavenly converse ;—if you had been thrilled, as Peter was, by the upliftings of wondrous hope and unfoldings of gracious purpose, as "they spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem ;"—who of you could have withheld the deep-felt expression of gladness, "Lord, it is good to be here !"—who of you could have restrained the desire to build, upon that sacred spot, the "tabernacles" of remembrance and of rest !

Dear friends, there is yet an institution in whose observance the humblest Christian talks with his Master, and with his Master's followers ;—that institution is the "assembling of ourselves together" for the purpose of church communion,—there is yet a place upon earth where some relics of that excellent glory linger, where the experiences of that mount of blessing are not all forgotten—that place is a pious and properly conducted Class-Meeting. Many a time has the writer of this brief address felt its salutary influence, to gladden the soul in seasons of intensest trial, to encourage the failing spirit in heavenward progress, to brace and nerve the mind for difficult duty, and with a grateful recollection of these, its Tabor-pleasures, he commends its advantages to you. "I believed, therefore have I spoken."

We do not claim for the Class-Meeting an essentially divine origin, although it would be difficult to doubt that an overruling Providence presided at its birth, and has kept it in operation until now. The mind, which devoutly remembers that with God there is nothing trivial, will readily acknowledge that when John Wesley, ministering merely to present necessities, and with no foresight of the future, called together at their

own request "eight or ten persons in London,"—there were in heaven an eye that marked—and a love that blessed the deed.

> "A thing is great or little only to a mortal's thinking,
> It is but the littleness of man that seeth no greatness in a trifle."

Mark the tenor of the language which tells of the rise of the "United Societies," which, founded upon scriptural principles, have now expanded into a flourishing church :—

> "In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired, (as did two or three more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together; which, from henceforward, they did every week, viz., on Thursday, in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them, (for their number increased daily,) I gave those advices from time to time which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meetings with prayer suited to their several necessities."

How forcibly does this remind us of the days of Malachi, when "they that feared the Lord *spake often one to another*, and the Lord hearkened and heard,—and a book of remembrance,"—*the Lord's class-book*,—"was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name!" How vividly does it recal that union in prayer which gives it such a princely power! "If two of you shall *agree* on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." How does it bring before us the exhortations scattered through the whole compass of apostolic writing! "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;"—and especially how accordant is it with the *mutual* confession of our faults *one to another*, (not auricular confession to a priest—*that* we abhor,) which St. James enjoins. (Jas. v. 26.) If we have not direct Scripture command, we have Scripture permission, approval, and usage;—and while we are content that a Class-Meeting should be considered as prudential rather than authoritative, we hold to the persuasion that it has been a means of grace, which, perhaps beyond all others of a supplemental character, has been signally honoured by the blessing of God.

You, as hearers of our ministry, are doubtless aware that membership in one of these Class-Meetings is indispensable to constitute union with Methodism, and, that those only, who statedly attend these seasons of Christian fellowship, are

"accredited and rightful communicants of our Church." Writing as Methodists we condemn not other sections of the church universal. It may not be their vocation. They certainly do not prize it as their privilege. For ourselves, however, for the benefit of our own family, we are free to confess an ardent attachment in this matter to the "good ways" of our fathers. The Class-Meeting is storied of old. It is associated with our traditional and sacred records of the master spirits of early Methodism—those large-hearted men "of whom the world was not worthy." It was to them as the blest Elim of palms and fountains to the desert wayfarer;—and such is the sanctity of affection with which we regard it, that it compels the prayer and that, not with bated breath, but with the loud voice of earnest entreaty;—God forbid the day should ever dawn when the Class-Meeting shall cease to be recognized as the distinctive badge of membership in the Methodist branch of the Church of Christ.

Let us be guarded here. We do not believe, nor do we affirm, that connexion with the Class-Meeting, is necessarily an indication of piety, or of that right state of heart which is acceptable in the sight of God. There may be,—there probably are,—members amongst us of whom we are "in doubt," and over whose defective consistency we mourn. It is not surprising, when there were "carnal walkers" in the Corinthian Church, and even a Judas amongst the twelve. But where is there an equal vigilance to prevent the recognition of improper persons as members? In what Church in Christendom is there manifested greater fidelity and solemnity in matters of experience and practice? The charge of encouraging mixed fellowship, which has been so injuriously cast upon our ministers, is unwarranted and untrue. True, our only requirement is "a desire to flee from the wrath to come." But what does this mean? How is it manifested? It is not the careless confession, in which there is no heart,—nor the emotion of the man, who repents to-night and sins again to-morrow,—nor yet the mere feeling of remorse, the Judas-like penitence, which worketh death. There must be "repentance towards God,"—the deep and abiding penitence—the strong conviction of personal guilt and danger—the "broken heart" which is God's chosen sacrifice—the godly sorrow, which chastens the entire character—the whole of the emotions comprehended in the expressive word—*contrition*. None, in the judgment of our Church—as embodied in her inimitable Rules—sincerely feel this desire but they who bring forth its "fruits meet for repent-

ance"—the crushing sense of ingratitude—the careful avoidance of evil—the earnest enquiry after good—the submissive search for truth—and the restless anxiety which refuses to be satisfied without the experience of its power. None but these, therefore, are interested in this address. Do not mistake us.—We invite you on the assumption—and that assumption is indispensable—and that assumption is all that is indispensable—that you are *this* desirous to "flee from the wrath to come." We want not, nay, we dread, an unconverted church. We are jealous of accessions that may pollute its purity. The careless, and the profane, and the trifling, and the selfish, alas! that we have such hearers! our invitation passes by.—Dearly as we wish their welfare, we *dare* not invite them, in their present state, amongst us.—"They have nor part nor lot in the matter." But we believe there are thousands of our hearers in different parts of the land, whose hearts God hath touched,—who are hopeful and promising as to religious impression, and manifesting a ceaseless concern for their souls;—and it is to them we make our appeal.

Dear friends, those of you that are in such a case, to this membership we invite *you*. We have watched for you with eager solicitude. We have yearned over you with a Pastor's yearning. Upon your spiritual state we have expended many an anxious thought, for your spiritual welfare we have breathed many a fervent prayer. We rejoice to see you in the sanctuary, but we would have you glad us with your presence at our family festivals. We see you standing at the threshold;—we wish you to cluster round the hearth-stone, and to be warmed at the fire. Perhaps you have not adequately considered the advantages of this invaluable fellowship. Will you lend us your attention for awhile to a brief enumeration?

1. *The Class-Meeting induces self-examination.* Thoughtlessness is the great sin and inveterate habit of the world.—The natural man presents the "remarkable spectacle of a soul afraid of itself, afraid to stay with itself, alone, still, and attentive." He may perhaps have parleyed sometimes with his immortal spirit, after the manner of some lordly nobleman speaking to an old servant of his house:—"Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry,"—or, haply, some adventurous one set out with the fixed intention of visiting his heart's secret chambers, but his feelings were like those of one who entered a gloomy

and long-deserted mansion. To his disordered imagination strange tremors shook the arras, unearthly echoes sounded from the stair, apparitions met the straining eye-ball upon every landing,—

> "For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
> A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
> And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
> The place is haunted !"

and he retired affrighted, with the big, cold drops upon his brow, and it must be a powerful motive that will tempt him into those chambers again. Nay, the Lord's accusation against his ancient people is chargeable to a great extent upon his people now, "*My people* do not consider." How apt is the Christian, the heir of a nobler life—the professor of a living faith, to neglect the examination of himself! The countless activities of this utilitarian age have been all temptations, to which his busy spirit has been but too prone to yield. The engrossing influence of business, the onward march of intellect, the absorbing strife of politics, even the enterprises of religious philanthropy have all, in turn, contributed most sadly to hinder the practice of self-communion. The active has banished the reflective;—and it is to be feared that there are professors of religion, who strangely reckon all the moments spent upon themselves *as so much wasted time.* Wordsworth has entered his indignant protest against the intrusion of a railway to disturb the serenities of Grasmere and Rydal. Oh for some spiritual laureate—some sweet singer in Israel, to decry the multiplied excitements, which tramp and rattle through the offended "lake-district" of mind! My friends, the Class-Meeting will "lead you beside these still waters." No right-minded and devotional spirit *dare* enter it without some kind of self-enquiry—some examination of himself—"whether he be in the faith." During the week, it may be, when the strife of competition has waxed fierce, and the race of human pursuits was going vigorously on, your thoughts were hurried into the midst of them, until they were bewildered even to exhaustion; but now the Class-Meeting is at hand, and the mind retires into its sanctuary, and continues with itself and with its God. It is like the court day of the soul, when the steward-conscience takes cognizance of all the tenants, and brings them respectively beneath their Master's eye. How searching that enquiry! How hallowed that communion! "Another week of my probation has fled. What record has it borne? What blessings has it scattered from its wings?

What deliverances have I experienced? What battles have I won? What have been my omissions, heart-wanderings, sins? Am I holier, more spiritually-minded! Have I a nobler scorn of the world? a more earnest avarice for heaven?—The heart must be the better for enquiries like these, made searchingly, and in the spirit of prayer. Then perhaps heavenly thoughts will troop upon us, like the descending visitants of Jacob's dream,—and it may be—who knows? that we may entertain angels unawares;"or better still, some kind-looking stranger may join us on our Emmaus-travel and "make our hearts burn within us as he talketh with us by the way." These are no trifling blessings, and of these the Class-Meeting is indirectly the procurer, because it in some sort *compels* self-communion, and thus induces a habit, which may be as powerful for good as former habits were powerful for evil.

II.—*The Class-Meeting promotes gratitude.* Love—the love of gratitude—is the essence of religion—the first feeling of the regenerate soul. It springs electric in the mind of the believer at his first sight of Jesus. Authority cannot command it. Terror cannot frighten it into existence. All the thousand-fold appliances of worldly wisdom cannot create it. There must be a perception of love in God—a sense of his good-will—a view of the crucified as well as of the cross before it be enkindled. "We love him *because* he first loved us." This feeling of gratitude, thus aroused, is too deeply grateful for description. Language is but a mockery. Illustration fails. It is beyond a figure, and without a parallel. Who sees not the danger that an emotion like this, if hidden in the breast, should spend itself by its own continuity? Gratitude is not like the mountain avalanche, which gains intensity from repression—it is rather like the fire, which imprisonment extinguishes,—or the air, which, pure and free, is the refreshing breath of heaven;—but, fouled by confinement, is the blast of pestilence and death. Contemplation upon God's boundless love tends naturally to expression. "While I was musing the fire burned, then spake I with my tongue." Now the Class-Meeting furnishes the most appropriate occasion for this expression of praise. There are enough to redeem from privacy, and not enough to exclude the notion of a family, and it would be difficult to find a more legitimate sphere, in which the full heart may utter its thanks, unfold its hopes, and breathe its prayers. Nay, *can* there be gratitude without this thankful acknowledgment? Is there not enough in the dealings of

your Heavenly Father to compel it? The grace which loved you from the beginning—the visitations of mercy which have lighted your path—the beams of promise that have shone upon your head—the kind heart that has borne with your wanderings—the beckoning hand which restored you when you went astray—are they not constraining you? If we were permitted to anticipate the objection which the rebel heart sometimes whispers, "I cannot speak," might we not say,—Ah, friends, get the love of God shed abroad within you, and it will fill your mouth with arguments. Wondrous is the power of this surpassingly mighty theme. It makes the lips of the stammerer eloquent, and the heart of the diffident bold. Under its inspiring influence knowledge kindles on the countenance—praise flows from the tongue—and the most timid and retiring are transported into the invitation of the Psalmist, "Come all ye that fear God, and I will *declare* what he hath done for my soul."

III.—*The Class-Meeting recognises brotherhood.* It is a mighty truth which God has written upon the universe, and stamped enduringly upon the great heart of humanity, that "No man liveth to himself." The world is a vast mass of dependencies. The feeblest woman or the humblest peasant exerts an influence which must be felt in the great brotherhood of mankind. It is a precious appointment of Providence that it has in some sense made our very selfishness benevolent,—that it has bound us, at peril of losing our own enjoyments, to care for the necessities of others,—and that it has extracted the most satisfying elements of public happiness from the joys and perils of individual lot. The heart, by a law of its constitution, must have something to which it can attach itself. Its emblems are the summer-tendril and the clasping ivy. It was never formed for the hermitage or the monastery—and you must do violence to all its exquisite charities, before it will entirely denude itself of all objects of solicitude and love. The Class-Meeting here comes in to *supply a great want of nature.* It concentrates the feeling of brotherhood—prevents it from being frittered away in vague and sentimental generalities—and gives it a definite object and aim. If the church is the temple, the Class-Meeting is an inner and sacred enclosure. If the church is the populous city, the Class-Meeting is the united family, where love is throned in the heart and confidence nestles in the roof-tree. Every faithful leader will impress upon his flock, and every devoted member will take care to feel, that, while the church at large claims his philanthropic sympathy

and effort, to his own fellow members he is to cherish the closer and deeper feelings of home. Here especially, there are no orphans. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." They are joined as in a commonwealth. "They love as brethren." Why join you not this heavenly communion? Are you not like the prodigal, in a far country, and perhaps, if your pride would but confess it, inwardly pining for the "bread enough and to spare" of your Father's house at home? Have you sufficiently considered that in your present state, regarding you as travellers to another world, you are isolated, and—forgive the word—*selfish*—exhibiting a practical denial of all brotherly relationship by remaining to wrestle with your enemies, and gain your heaven alone?

IV.—*The Class-Meeting elicits sympathy.* Good sense and rich experience are the fruits of intercourse. No man ever yet became either wise or holy by exclusively "communing with his own heart upon his bed." We have heard much lately of the tendency of seclusion to cherish the spirit of piety, and there are not wanting those who would revive in all their severity the monasticisms of past ages. Mistaken men! The sweet flowerets of Divine grace can rarely be acclimated to the damp soil of the convent, they are not as the sensitive mimosia, which shrinks even from the gentlest handling, but rather like the delicate heart's ease, grateful for gracious dew-falls, and breathing zephyrs, and the blessed sun, and yet courting the culture and the companionship of man. Christianity is not an imaginative revelry upon great truths—it is an earnest endeavour to exemplify them. It is not contemplative pietism, it is unceasing labour. It is not an alien principle, which has no sympathy with our nature, and is content with its distant and constrained submission,—it is an all-pervasive element, shrined in the heart, and influencing benignly the whole of the character. "Knox," says Dr. Chalmers, "did not destroy the old Romish pulpits at the time of the Reformation, he did better, he *preached* in them." Christianity does not annihilate a single passion, does not extinguish a single affection of our nature. It does better. It employs the former for its own noble purposes,—and it fixes the latter where they may attach themselves without fear of idolatry, even upon "things above." The passions of the christian therefore, are as strong, the affections of the christian are as warm, as those of any man. The charities of life, and of love,

and of home, flourish as endearingly in the mind of the christian as anywhere, and he has that intense yearning for sympathy which characterizes universal man. Here again, the Class-Meeting *supplies a great want of nature.* It is composed of a band of wayfarers, met for the express purpose of sympathizing with each other in the struggles and perils of their common journey. How often has it opened up a weekly heaven, amid the dull and clouded atmosphere of sinfulness and time! One is sorely tempted. The temptation presses hard upon his spirit, with such mighty fascinations is it clad, —in such newer blasphemy does it prompt him to indulge, that he thinks surely *this* is a "temptation that is not common to men." But at the Class that week a fellow-traveller relates the *bitter* experience of the same suggestions, and the *blest* experience of deliverance from their power, and a new song is put into his mouth, and he goes on his way rejoicing. Another is bowed down beneath the influence of a temptation adjusted with such nicety to his peculiar besetment as to be almost irresistible in its appeals,—but the weekly season of fellowship has come—and the words of the faithful leader are "words in season," and One mightier than the leader is there, and a glance at *his* pure countenance, a touch of *his* invigorating hand, and he is nerved for the conflict, and spurns the assaulter away. Another has been stricken with a spiritual paralysis,—a wearisome torpor has seized him, a strange indifference has come upon his soul—and as, in the Class-Meeting he tells his tale of half-heartedness and sin, amid the counsels of the faithful and the prayers of the pious, the glorious presence of the Saviour bursts in light upon the chained one, and in all the strength and nobility of spiritual life—he "walks" afresh "with God."

And who can tell the beneficial influence to the Zionward journeyer—when persons of all ranks, characters, and ages *unite* to testify that "the same Lord over all is rich in mercy unto all them that call upon him!" Perhaps there is an aged pilgrim who for years has walked and fainted not. Many a hill of Difficulty has he climbed, many a valley of Humiliation has he trodden—he has tales to tell of wary walkings on enchanted ground—of hair-breadth escapes out of the net of the Flatterer—aye, and of ravishing prospects from the Delectable mountains and from the elevations of Pisgah;—and, while his eye brightens and his voice falters, he tells also that he has never repented his setting forth on pilgrimage, and that the pleasures are sweeter, and the toils less irksome, than when,

in youth, he grasped the palmer-staff, and strapped on the sandals. Is it nothing to be favoured with the testimony of such an one, and to sit under his shadow with delight?—to have our rash judgments rebuked by his experience, and our faith confirmed by the ardours of his imperishable hope? There is a young convert there, it may be, who has recently realized a wondrous change, even "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." He has found "peace and joy in believing;" and the new-found gladness that is within him steeps the sky in brighter blue, and decks the earth with bonnier green; and, blushing at his own fervour, he pours forth in the Class-Meeting his ascriptions of praise. The old man hears and is reminded of the days of his first love—it is like a snatch of the music that used to thrill the soul of yore, and, in a moment, memory has painted the first conviction—the early struggles—the doubt that harassed his young mind—the triumph with which he hailed its departure—and, above all, the eventful moment when joy broke through his swimming eyes as he believingly said "My Father!" Who sees not the mutual and glorious benefit—the young instructed by the experience of the aged—the aged charmed and quickened by the enthusiasm of the young? And then there is one sympathy on this head which it would be unpardonable in us to omit, and that is the sympathy of prayer. Who can be lonely or despairing, even in this wilderness-world, with the consciousness that there are hearts *praying* for him?—hearts of those who are animated by similar hopes, and depressed by similar fears, and who are bound by their membership to "make intercession for" the household of faith "according to the will of God?" My friends, if there were no other disadvantage in your present anomalous position as aloof from the church of Christ, than this—that by your separation you deprive yourselves of the Church's *prayers*—there is a fearfulness in the thought which might well cause you to reflect and tremble. Desolate indeed is the spirit—cursed as the dewless hills of Gilboa—for which no prayer ascends, on whose behalf no knee is bowed to heaven. Rich in his penury is poverty's poorest child, if his portion is the supplication of the faithful! Happy the lonely watcher upon the gallant vessel's deck, if over the waste of waters the wife of his bosom prays! Never is a heart orphaned, or divorced utterly from hope and heaven, if in some extremest corner there arises one yearning spirit's prayer. And if individual prayer can do so much, what must be the effect of many? My friends, we would be almost content to rest the

whole matter here, this one advantage should so overwhelmingly constrain your decision. Bold indeed must you be in self-confidence, in infatuation, in SIN, if you refuse to avail yourselves of the sympathy of Prayer. Oh! by every motive which your souls will acknowledge as having either sacredness or power, you are adjured, against the evil day, to ensure for yourselves the "effectual fervent prayer."

V. *The Class-Meeting confesses discipleship.* Every believer is called to *witness* for God. You cannot have forgotten how largely our Saviour impressed upon his immediate disciples the duty of "not being ashamed of him," and of "confessing him in the sight of men." You will also recollect how the apostle of the Gentiles makes confession to be on a parallel with faith in that memorable passage, "If thou shalt *confess with thy mouth* the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth *confession is made unto salvation.*" Such confession cannot be adequately made either by mere verbal acknowledgment or exemplary obedience, it can only be made by a solemn dedication "to God's people according to his will." Your solitary "witness" of obedience, or of faith—is lost like an invisible atom in the air—it is the *union* of each particle, in itself insignificant, that constitutes the "cloud" of witnesses which the world can see. Ask yourselves, we pray you, whether this is not just the element that is lacking in your religious decision. You are desirous to flee from the wrath to come, you have yielded in some measure to religious influence, you are endeavouring to "square your useful lives below by reason and by grace," you have even felt at times some emotions of religious joy, and yet you are not permanently happy. Why? Because you have been, pardon the word, traitorous to the grace of God, in that, like Hezikiah of old, you have not "*rendered again* according to the benefit done unto you." You have long been espoused to Christ, and cherish with joy the secret remembrance of your betrothal, but your non-confession has spoiled it all, for the voice of law does not recognize clandestine marriage. O remember how seriously you peril, by your present conduct, the interests of your souls! You are like a venturous traveller, who plunges, unaided and alone into the tangled thicket, whose every bush may hide an assassin, whose every tree may cover a robber. You are like a ship that has voyaged from the fleet, and forsaken the con-

voy, and if a storm *should* arise, where are the friendly hands to launch the life-boat or to rescue the perishing? You are like a soldier, who, confiling in his own prowess, spurns the discipline of the regiment and passes singly through the armies of the aliens, and if he *should* be surprised and stricken, where are the generous comrades to cover his retreat, or bear him from the field, or "bind up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine?" Nay friends, for we can hesitate no longer, we must deliver our soul—God REQUIRES this public dedication. He must not only have the enlightened approval of the head, and the loyal allegiance of the heart, but *the cordial embrace of the hand*;—and we dare not refrain from the expression of an opinion, founded we believe, upon the requirements of the law of God, that so long as you keep aloof from his people, and are not united in connexion with some branch of his visible church, YOU ARE NOT SAFE—YOU ARE IN DANGER.

We believe in the present state of the antagonist armies of truth and error, *Neutrality is Opposition.* "He that is not for us is against us," and the transition is a very natural one to the belief that *connexion with some visible branch of the Church of Christ is necessary to salvation.* We say not what church—God forbid that we should trammel the conscience of any one—but as right-hearted Methodists, Methodists from conviction and preference, we should be guiltily wrong if we dared not, and did not recommend our own.

It is not our business, it is not our wish to make proselytes. We would not descend from our elevation, we would not leave our vantage-ground to do it. "We have not so learned Christ." With other churches we have no quarrel. We regard them—all who hold the head,—as "houses of the Lord," and heartily do we wish them God speed. "Let there be no strife between our herdmen and theirs." But we differ somewhat in our notions of spiritual agriculture, and haply, it is our vocation to reclaim some waste lands that they would not think worth the tillage. You will not blame us, therefore, if while we do not disparage their communion, we prefer our own. Broad principles of philanthropy, however expansive, never root out the love of home. He is a churl, who cannot warm himself at any hearth but his own;—and he is only half a man, who is not, after all, loudest in praise of his own ingle nook, and of the comfortable blaze that mantles from his own fire. Upon *you* we have a claim. You are haunted by no scruples as to the validity of our orders, or the purity of our doctrines.—By

your attendance upon our ministry you have accorded us your free and generous preference. "If we are not apostles unto others—yet doubtless we are apostles unto you."—Be no longer outer-court worshippers.—Bind yourselves to us by a tenderer tie. Come into our church. Approach the inner shrines of our worship.—Attach yourselves to our Class-Meetings, and you will find them to be as the "upper room" renowned for the rushing wind and for the cloven tongues of flame.

Now, dear friends, what is your decision? Bring all your objections, all the thousand excuses which the unwilling heart coins;—the fear of man,—the inconsistency of professors—the dread of ridicule,—the apprehension of falling,—the repugnance to *declare* God's dealings with you;—weigh them in the balances of the sanctuary;—and ask yourselves I entreat you, in the name of God, and under the impression of his eye—"Shall I deem these apologies sufficient in the article of death, and when the light of eternity shall flash upon the doings of time?

Dear friends, our task is done. This address has been written in many weaknessess, and in much prayer. Read it in a similar spirit, and ask God in the secrecy of your communion-closet to teach you his will. Change is the great law of the present state of being. The autograph of decay is graven upon temple, and tower, and time. Our friends have faded and fallen in our sight, "who hath not lost a friend?" Ourselves are dying creatures. He who writes, and you who read, will speedily pass to the judgment. Already the broad shadow of eternity looms upon us, under that shadow meditate and decide. Everything around you seems to urge a recognition of the vast importance of the claim. The wiles of the enemy, the deceitfulnesses, never yet fathomed, of the human heart,—the perils of the yet untravelled future,—the awfulness of wandering onward agonized and *without a praying friend*,—the blessings of christian communion,—the helpfulness of rich and mellow experience,—the absolute requirement of God,—all, as with the voice of many waters, swell the forcefulness of our last appeal, which we now fling forth upon your souls, and may heaven clothe it with power: "COME WITH US, AND WE WILL DO YOU GOOD, FOR THE LORD HATH SPOKEN GOOD CONCERNING ISRAEL."

W. M. P.

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